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The Sketch

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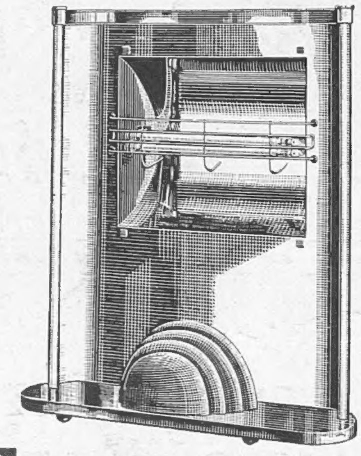

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The Sketch

No. 2511 – Vol. CXCIII. WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12, 1941. ONE SHILLING.

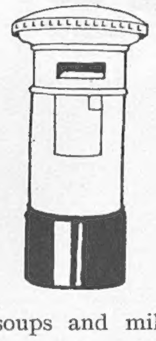
FANCIED AS AMERICA'S No. 1 GIRL FOR 1941.

JINX FALKENBURG *is the leading candidate for the title of America's No. 1 Girl for 1941. In retrospect one can list up "No. 1 Girls" in the U.S.A. as far back as the days of Jenny Lind, but only within the last five years has a No. 1 Girl emerged as an annual phenomenon, never deliberately chosen, but appearing through a spontaneous canonisation by Press and public. Jinx, who is twenty-two, with large brown eyes, has the type of looks which, to quote an American journalist, "knocks men for a loop at the first look."*

A

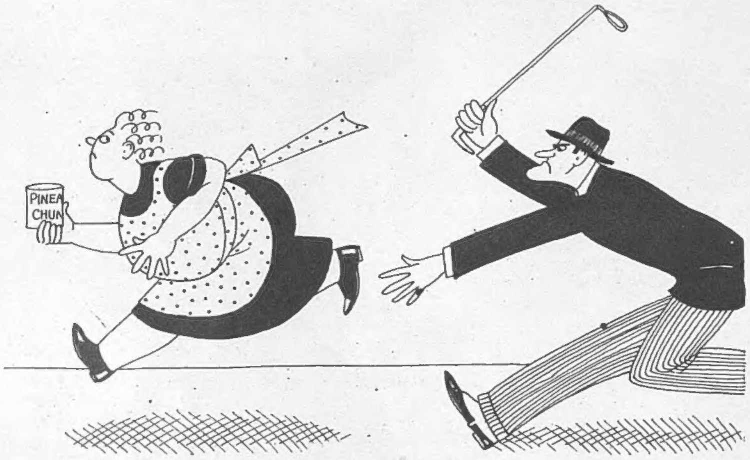
Please forward

By JOYCE DENNYS.



MY DEAR ROBERT—I think the British Housewife is having a confusing as well as a difficult time just now. Not very long ago we were urged to fill up our store-cupboards with enough food to last us for a fortnight in case of Invasion. "Up, Housewives, and at 'em!" was the slogan of the day, and, burning with patriotic zeal, we all rushed to the grocer's.

Filling up a store-cupboard is, of course, the greatest fun, and Matins and I spent a happy morning stowing away tins of tongues and soups and milk and fruit and a popular beef stew with veg. in a very, very secret place, which I won't write down here in case this letter were to fall into Hitler's hands.



"So much as a tin of pineapple chunks."

Charles raised his eyebrows rather at the weekly house-keeping cheque, until it was explained to him that it was all part of the Victory Campaign.

The glow of our pride and self-satisfaction had hardly had time to die down when I read in the paper one morning that a Power at Whitehall had made a speech in which he had said that he had been shocked—yes, *shocked*—to find that the British Public was Hoarding Food. The rest of his speech rather gave one the impression that he would take pleasure in personally and publicly horse-whipping anybody who had so much as a tin of pineapple chunks stowed away under the stairs.

Blushing hotly, Matins and I rushed to the secret hiding-place and unearthed our treasure. For the next fortnight Evensong and I fed Charles, who has a prejudice against eating tinned foods of any description, on mysterious and highly-seasoned dishes.

"Curry *again*, Henrietta?"
"Well, yes, Charles. It's warming this weather, don't you think?"
"What's this made of?"
"Oh, just bits, you know."
"It looks a little like tongue to me," said Charles, peering closely at his plate and dissecting a small piece in an unpleasant surgical manner.
"There might be one or two little bits of tongue in it, Charles."

Next week was Invasion Week, and on opening my morning paper I read that the Housewife also could play her part by Staying Put, and doling out, with forethought and economy, those stores which she had wisely collected while the Germans were still on the other side of the Channel.

I gave a low groan and dropped the paper on the floor.
"What's the matter?" said Charles.
"I'm afraid the books will be rather high again this week, Charles."
"Never mind," said Charles kindly. "They've been very low for the last fortnight."
"I bet they have," I said to myself, but I didn't say it aloud, as I am a firm believer in letting sleeping dogs lie.

Isn't it funny the way the initials "B. O." always stand for something rather awful? In the chemists' advertisements before the war, of course, they stood for something so humiliating that it could only be alluded to by initials, and even then with shame. When Bill and the Linnet were small they used to mean "Buzz Off," and though heralding a period of peace when our Little Ones would have returned to the nursery whence they came, so that the phrase was music in the ears of Charles and myself, Bill and the Linnet say that it used to sound to them like a passing knell. Now they stand for Billeting Officer and Black-out, two of the biggest Bogeys of our lives.

The other day, when I was having my hair done, I composed a 1941 Folk Song called "Black-outs Hey," which began—

Oh, come, my Love, come away, come away,
And do the B.O. with Me-O.

While I was under the drier I worked out a rather engaging little Folk Dance to go with it, in which the couples advanced, each holding two sticks with a piece of black cloth suspended between them, changed partners, set to corners, and, after a little Olde Worlde stamping and circling, advanced down the room in a long line, the black cloth held high above their heads like a long, dark ribbon.

I was so pleased with my idea that I took it to Mrs. Whinebite, who is the Folk Dance and Song queen down here; but I am sorry to say she didn't think much of it.

"If you don't mind my saying so, Henrietta," she said, "I think it would look rather silly, and all that black stuff would quite spoil the brightness of the print frocks and sun-bonnets."
"They might wear tin hats and gas-masks."
"God forbid!" said Mrs. Whinebite, closing her eyes.
"But Folk Dances are supposed to represent the spirit of the age, aren't they?" I said, for I was loth to abandon my idea without a struggle. "In a few hundred years the gas-mask will probably have evolved into something quite quaint, such as a wreath of wild flowers worn round the nose and chin, and tied to the head with ribands gay."

"Something quite quaint."

I thought it would please Mrs. Whinebite to hear me say "ribands" instead of "ribbons," but by that time she wasn't even listening.

Always your affectionate Childhood's Friend,

HENRIETTA.

"Black-outs Hey!"

JENNY LIND, *famous Swedish soprano, would have been America's No. 1 Girl, 1852, had such a term been invented in her day.*

LILIAN RUSSELL, *actress and vocalist, was a Glamour Girl of the 'nineties. Alice Faye played the name-part in the film of her life.*

MARY PICKFORD, *known for years as "The World's Sweetheart," was the No. 1 Girl of her period.*

CLARA BOW, *who was known as the "It" Girl, enjoyed an enormous vogue, both in the States and in this country.*

Above: DORIS DUKE, *now Mrs. Doris Duke Cromwell, captured the public fancy on account of her looks and her immense wealth.*

GLORIA BAKER, *society débutante, daughter of Mrs. Margaret Emerson, was definitely hailed as America's No. 1 Girl, 1937.*

Left: BRENDA FRAZIER, *granddaughter of Lady Williams-Taylor, was the débutante elected by popular acclaim as the No. 1 Girl, 1938.*

Right: COBINA WRIGHT *was the No. 1 Girl for 1939. Here she is posing to the veteran artist, Charles Dana Gibson, as a Gibson Girl of 1904.*

LANA TURNER, *young screen actress, occupied the position of Glamour Girl No. 1 last year.*

FLASH-BACK OF AMERICA'S No. 1 GIRLS.

On our front page we give a portrait of model girl and actress, Jinx Falkenburg, favourite for the title of America's No. 1 Girl, 1941. Though it is only for the last five years that the term "America's No. 1 Girl" has been used annually, there is no doubt that such favourites as Jenny Lind, Lilian Russell, Mary Pickford and Clara Bow occupied the position of No. 1 Girls. Of recent years the crown has been bestowed on three society débutantes, Doris Duke, Gloria Baker and Brenda Frazier, and on one screen starlet, Lana Turner.

MOTLEY NOTES.

By ALAN KEMP.

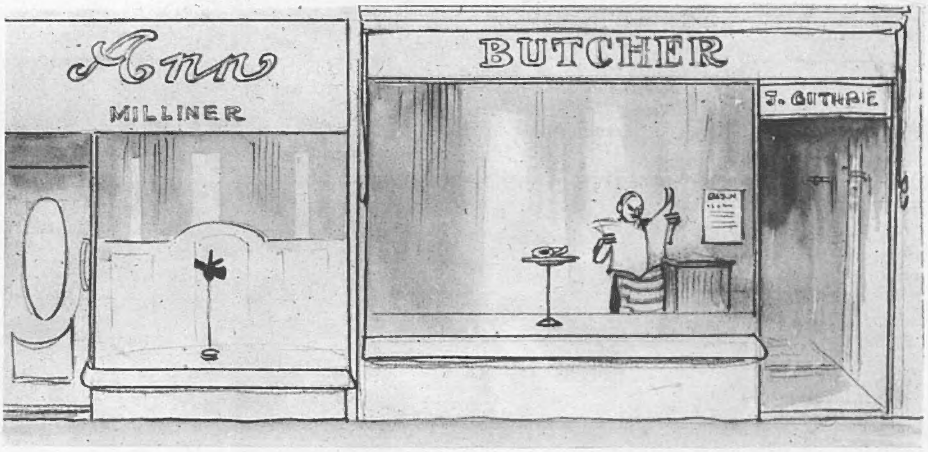
Dissembling Their Love. This is one of the occasions—not the first—in our history when we are all doing a little stock-taking. We stand alone, or virtually alone, against a very powerful, relentless and determined foe, from whom we expect no quarter if we fail in our defence. We believe that we are fighting not only for self-preservation, but for certain principles and institutions which are essential to free and decent living throughout the world. In fact, we are not only stout, but rather noble fellows! Unfortunately, our nobility is not universally appreciated. We may be good, but we are not popular. It is doubtful whether we ever have been popular. Certain of our characteristics seem to irritate unenlightened foreigners. We did not mind that—we regarded it as just the ignorance which you expect from foreigners—when things were going well with us; but lately we have had our troubles, and the more they multiply, the more every man's hand seems to be turned against us. If we come through—as we shall—we shall be Saviours of Society, the wonder and admiration of the world; but meanwhile, a good many people seem to owe us a good many grudges, and we ask ourselves, Why?

Palm and Pine.

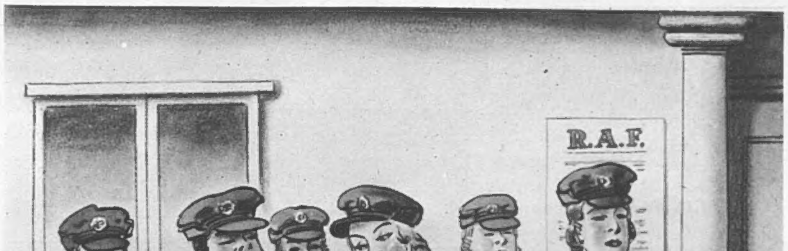
It is not surprising if we have excited a certain amount of jealousy. If Hitler judges the British Empire solely by the map (which is an absurd and ignorant thing to do), it is no wonder that he foams at the mouth every time he looks at it. There, up in the north of Europe, you see a small patch of pink which would fit into a corner of most European countries. But this diminutive pink blob is responsible for enormous pink patches all over the earth. Altogether, this pink rash covers about one quarter of the world's land surface. And then there is all the water surface, which is much larger than the land. There is a distinct shade of pink amid the blue of all the oceans of earth; it is a trail left in every latitude by British ships. A quarter of the land of the terrestrial globe, a domination over all its waters, and about a quarter of the total number of the inhabitants of the earth. It certainly seems an adequate *Lebensraum*. To Have-Nots it seems definitely greedy.

Lords of the Earth.

How and why did the pink dot spread so enormously? A good many years ago, Seeley, in a book which was widely read, fired off his famous epigram that "the British Empire was acquired in a fit of absence of mind." I have never understood what he meant, and the more I think about the aphorism, the more empty it seems to me. It is quite true that at one time England cared very little about her possessions unless they were definite sources of wealth. She lost a whole dominion in North America because she simply could not be bothered to govern it intelligently. But if the Empire was sometimes treated casually, it certainly was not acquired casually; an enormous amount of effort and daring and enterprise went into the obtaining of it, and still more into its building-up by the settlers, who had all the donkey-work to do. There was, in fact, so much daring and enterprise that some people have quite a different explanation of our colonial methods. Dr. Goebbels, for example, will tell you that we went about the world slaying, slaughtering and plundering everybody who came in our way. That is even more silly than the "absence of mind" theory. We certainly "conquered" and annexed at a time when there was a great deal of empty territory to be "conquered" by the first comer, and when it was perfectly good international morality to outstrip the other fellow in the race for expansion. But a great deal of our Empire has been acquired by entirely peaceful means, and the idea that we have been pirates and oppressors all over the earth simply is not history.



Choice—and no choice!
DRAWN BY TERNENT.



"Excuse me, dear—your undercarriage is slipping!"
DRAWN BY TERNENT.

The Devouring Monster.

Dr. Goebbels will also tell you that we "own" this huge stretch of earth and sea, and it is not right or fair that anybody should own so much. I think that Hitler probably believes this quite sincerely, and it would be simply impossible to make him understand that we no more "own" Canada, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand than we own the United States. He would merely laugh if you told him that these countries are completely independent, self-governing communities with an unfettered right to legislate for themselves, and even with a right to declare their neutrality in any war in which England is engaged. I am afraid there are a great many people even in England who do not understand what a large measure of independence the Dominions possess, nor what is meant by a "Commonwealth of Nations, freely associated." We do not even "own" our colonies. Everywhere, even among primitive peoples, we encourage the largest possible measure of self-government; and if it comes to calculating the material advantages of "ownership," there are very few cases in which we can say that the profits of our "possessions" outweigh the heavy responsibilities.

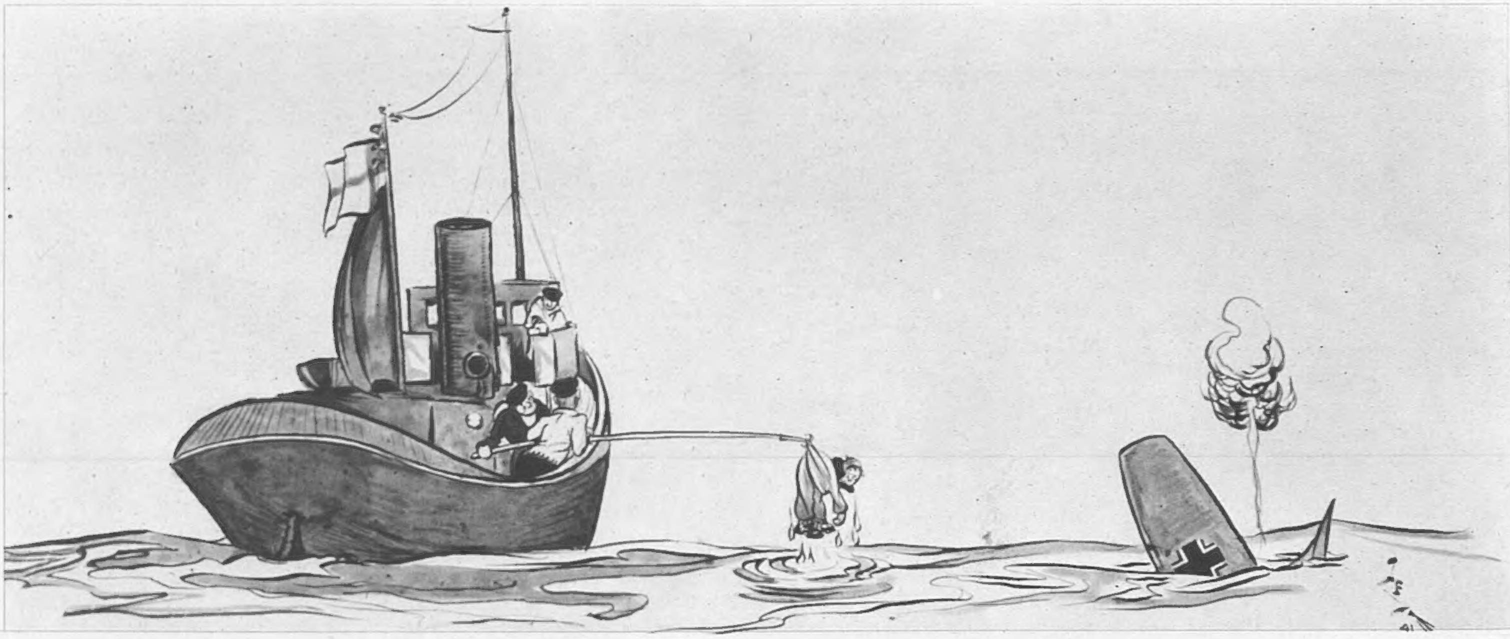
The Best Policy.

Anyhow, we have had ample opportunities for displaying our national qualities, for better or for worse, all over the world. What are the things for which we can, with a clear conscience, take credit? A friend said to me the other day that he thought the English the most honest

race on earth materially and the most dishonest intellectually. I want to dwell on that for a moment. Are we as honest, materially, as we think we are? I have travelled about the world a good deal, and my observation is that it is no mere catch-phrase that an Englishman's word is his bond. I was once buying some furs in a bazaar at Darjeeling. I found I had not brought enough money with me from my hotel. I told the *babu* that I would return later in the day and bring the money and collect my purchases. "Will not the Sahib sign a cheque?" he said, producing a blank cheque-form. "But," I said, "I am a complete stranger to you, and I will be here only a few days. Isn't it risky to take a cheque?" He was deeply pained at the mere suggestion. "Would you take any Englishman's cheque?" I asked. He would be honoured, he declared. "Yes, but would *it* be honoured? Have you never been let down?" I asked. He looked grave and said, Yes; once, many years ago, an English Sahib's cheque had done him wrong. He had kept it, more in sorrow than in anger, and produced it, tattered and grimy, for my advice. It had been returned by the bank for irregular indorsement! I had difficulty in explaining, but I hope I convinced the trusting *babu* that not even that black sheep among Englishmen was really black.

Do Unto Others. Yes, we have our wrong-'uns, but, by and large, we are, like Hamlet, "indifferent honest." We also pride ourselves on being just. Is that claim substantiated? I think the answer is that we could not possibly have retained so much of the world within our orbit if we had not shall convince a good many people in America that the Indians are not our black slaves. Other empires have tried the rod of iron, and have perished; we have adopted the peculiar method of keeping our Empire together by letting it fall apart, and it seems to have worked. Our critics also say that a great deal of our vaunted liberty is merely lack of discipline. One is sometimes inclined to agree with them. A libertarian may easily be a libertine, and the type is not unknown in England. Liberty may be, as we believe, life-blood, but you can have more blood in your veins than is good for your system. And if democracy were wholly selfish and irresponsible and undisciplined, we should still ask ourselves: Which would you rather have, Habeas Corpus or the Gestapo?

Scribes and Pharisees. It is easy, of course, to be irritatingly complacent about these three virtues of honesty, justice and liberty which we so persistently claim, and there is no doubt that we do irritate others by our calm assumption of them. There are, indeed, those among us who talk as if we had a monopoly of them. These ultra-British Britons have earned us the reputation of arrogance and hypocrisy. "As dishonest intellectually," my friend observed, "as we are honest materially." An infinite capacity, we are often told, for self-deception. I suppose there must be some truth in this opinion, since it is so widely held abroad. ("Perfidious," too—that's a shock to our sense of honour!) But, for myself, I am really unable to see that we are worse in this respect than any other race. I have never heard of any nation which was exactly humble about itself; very often, the



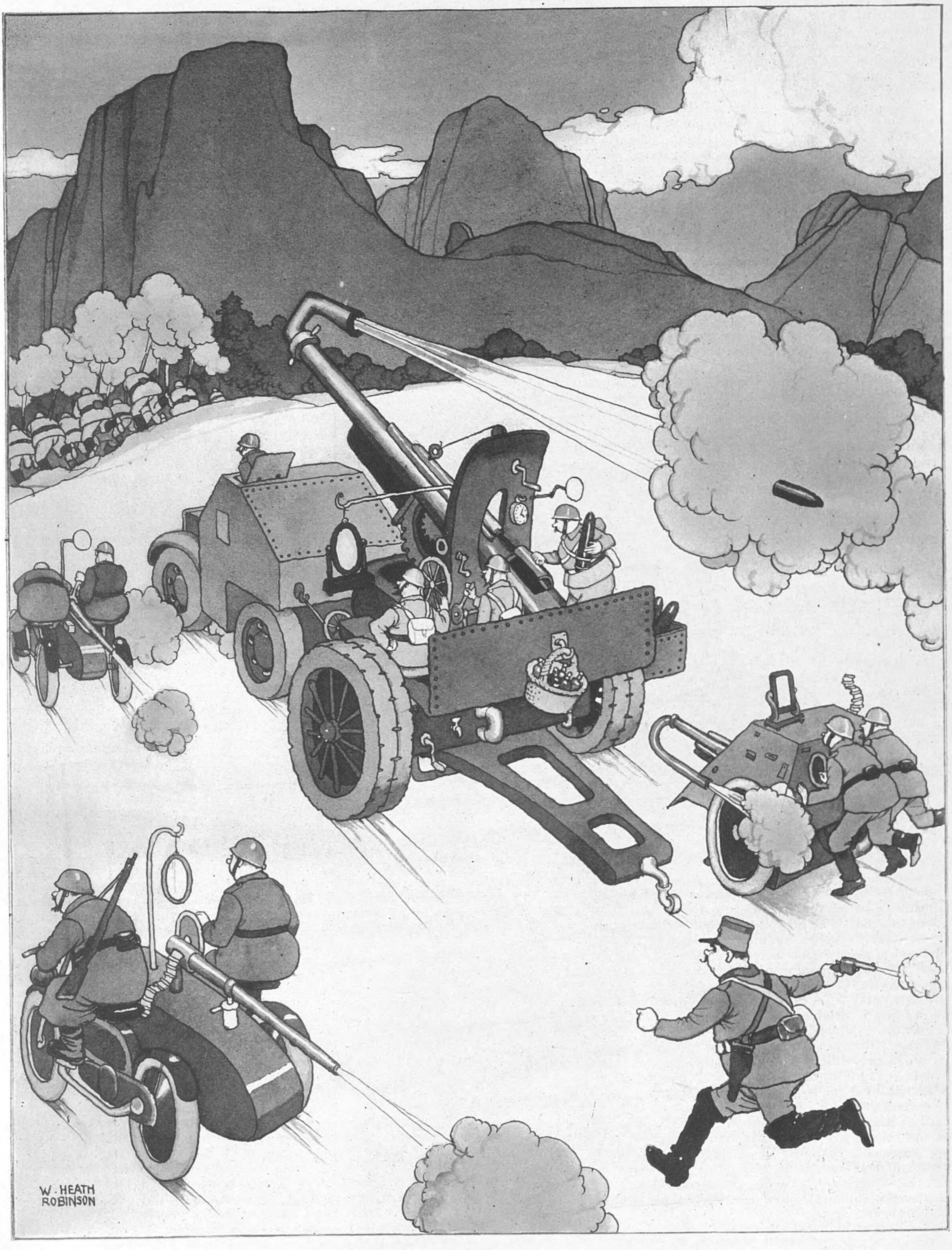
"This is such a little one—scarcely worth our picking up, Skipper!"

DRAWN BY J. E. BROOME.

treated it with substantial justice, since (as the Dictators will find) human beings will not live indefinitely under injustice. Nothing illustrates better the gulf between the British and the Nazi systems than this matter of justice. It would be absurd to claim that there is no injustice in Britain and no justice in Germany; but it is the deliberate theory (not merely the detestable practice) of the Nazis that the administration of justice is simply part of the system of government—in other words, whatever the justice of a particular situation may be, it must yield to the convenience of administration. Now, that is utter blasphemy to the English conception of living. It simply would not occur to an English judge (nowadays, at all events—it has not always been so in the past) to hesitate to give a judgment which was inconvenient to the Government. Nor would it occur to anybody in the country that the judge ran the least risk by doing so. We have in England, in the Lord Chancellor, a remarkable case of "schizophrenia," or dual personality. One half of him is a Cabinet Minister, and the other half a judge. He is no more a "good party man" when he is in the seat of judgment than he is a judge when he is addressing a political meeting. It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the difference between the two conceptions of justice. If we ever abandoned ours, the very heart would be cut out of Englishry.

With a Great Price. And then, of course, we claim to be the champions of liberty. Our enemies regard this as our star performance of hypocrisy. "You talk of liberty," they say, "and you hold a quarter of the earth in subjection!" Then we must begin all over again to explain to them that the Australians and Canadians and South Africans are not really our vassals—but we shall never convince them, any more than we smaller and more insignificant it is, the more convinced it is of its unique virtues, and this self-satisfaction frequently passes under the guise of "patriotism." It seems to me that the Englishman, far from being convinced of his own perfections, is much better able than most people to see his own absurdities and to laugh at them. Or is that another delusion? Is our notorious habit of jesting even about the most solemn things in ourselves and others, only another example of our hypocrisy?

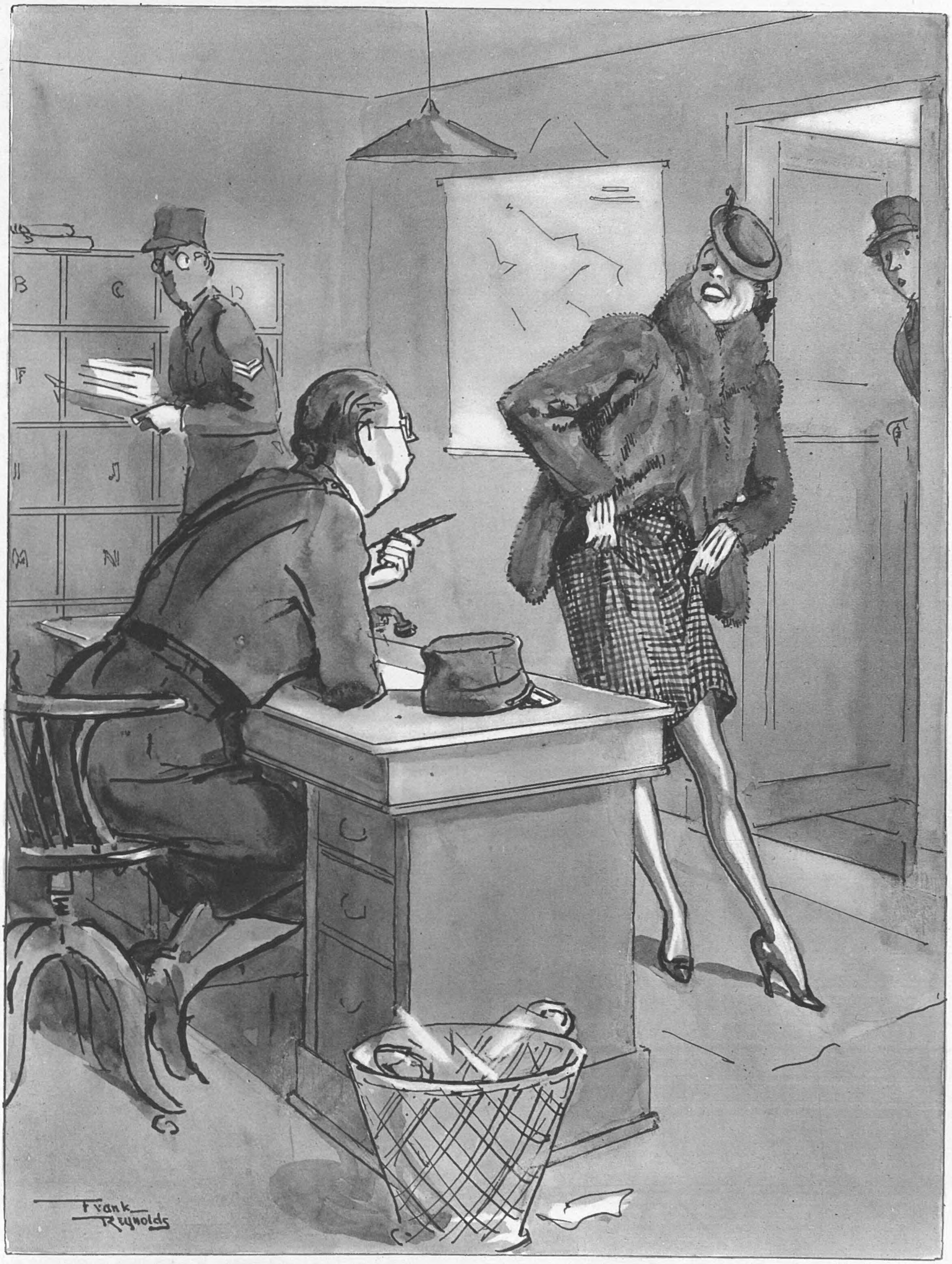
So There! Startling though it may sound, I am prepared to believe that the British nation has its faults! But it ought not to be startling, seeing that every Englishman (more especially if he happens to be an Irishman) spends a good deal of his time in pointing out the monstrous, incorrigible and ridiculous faults of his country, his fellow-citizens, and, above all, his rulers. This sport is so well-established as a national pastime that it may sound even more audacious if I say that I am prepared to believe that the British nation has certain virtues! I should hate to regard myself as a Colonel Blimp, and I don't really think I am. I see holes, and bad holes, in our honesty, our justice, our freedom, and all the other virtues on which we take our stand. I may be completely deceived in thinking that we possess them, but I do think so, though I also think that these qualities are not vouchsafed either to nations or to individuals except in a very imperfect degree. Of this I have no doubt, that what I understand to be English habits and institutions represent to me a better way of life than any other that I know of; and that, to me, without any brass bands or flying banners, is patriotism. Its practical application is that when you are threatened with another way of life which you disapprove, then—again without bands or bunting—you must live or die for that which you do approve.



MUSSOLINI'S SECRET WEAPON DISCLOSED!

W. Heath Robinson is able, this week, to make a most important military disclosure. He has been exclusively informed of a new secret weapon devised for the use of the Italian forces in Albania. It consists of NEW BACK-ACTION GUNS AND EQUIPMENT *to enable retreats to be fiercely executed, as illustrated in his drawing.*

DRAWN BY W. HEATH ROBINSON.



"YOU MISUNDERSTAND. I ASKED TO SEE YOUR CREDENTIALS!"

DRAWN BY FRANK REYNOLDS.

CINEMA CAMEOS.

By C. A. LEJEUNE.

WHEN Katharine Hepburn and the film industry parted brass-rags just over two years ago, no one would have predicted that the actress would be back so soon, breaking records in the very picture-houses where they once called her " box-office poison." Yet that is exactly what has happened with " THE PHILADELPHIA STORY." " The Philadelphia Story," after 416 performances in the theatre, is the current rage of the American screen. It rivals the popularity of " Rebecca " and " Gone With the Wind." The exhibitors, a little bewildered, but still sound business men, have taken Miss Hepburn back to their hearts.

It seems odd at first sight, for " The Philadelphia Story," which you can see at the Empire this week, is really quite a slim little comedy. It has no very strong dramatic theme. It is not nearly so important, one would say, as a film like " Mary of Scotland," in which Miss Hepburn conspicuously failed to register. But it just happens to have that elusive quality that makes a winning film. Miss Hepburn comes back again to the sort of part she did so well in " Holiday," a society girl of good family, with a good brain, and a good heart, but too many privileges and too much money. She plays one Tracy Lord, spoilt daughter of a first-line Philadelphia home. When the film begins, she is all set to divorce her first husband (Cary Grant), for mixing too much whisky with his blue blood.

This, one of the many personal shots from " Yellow Cæsar," shows the Duce as the muscular sportsman.

Two years later, we find her on the point of marriage with Suitor Number Two (John Howard), a self-made business man, and quite a bit of a prig into the bargain. On the very day before the wedding, potential Suitor Number Three (James Stewart) comes into her life. He is a long, diffident, gangling reporter from a society magazine, sent down to Philadelphia to cover the story.

The main action of the film takes place on the day before the ceremony and the wedding-day itself. Tracy, overstrung and edgy at the presence of the three young men—for Husband Number One is still very much on the spot—loses her Vere de Vere repose. She drinks too much champagne, and goes swimming in the moonlight with the reporter, in the minimum of clothes. The horrified tale, carried home by her schoolgirl sister Dinah (Virginia Weidler), brings about the exit of the day's prospective bridegroom. Husband Number One takes his place at the altar, and the reporter, a philosophic fellow, goes back to his magazine with a new and affectionate tolerance for the privileged classes.

They say that " The Philadelphia Story " was one of the smoothest pictures ever made in the Metro-Goldwyn studios. It was shot in thirty-five days, five days under schedule, without a single retake. Miss Hepburn, of course, knew the part of Tracy inside out before she came anywhere near the cameras. It was specially written for her in the first place by her old friend, the playwright Philip Barry. And the studio gave her her favourite director, George Cukor, who had guided her through three of her best pictures, " A Bill of Divorcement," " Little Women," and " Holiday." Added to which, she got a couple of leading men, either of whom most actresses would have been willing to pray for. Cary Grant she had worked with before in several pictures. James Stewart was a new partner, but the combination seems to have been a success from the start.

I can enthusiastically recommend " The Philadelphia Story." It is a gay, human piece, of the kind we can do with at this moment. It may be thin in content, but the treatment and performance are so superior that the slightness of the plot never worries you. I wish I could say as much for " NO, NO, NANETTE " (New Gallery). " Nanette," on the stage, was a grand musical comedy, but even its best friends could hardly claim that its plot was significant. Director Herbert Wilcox, however, appears to have taken its qualities very seriously. He seems to have conceived of " No, No, Nanette " as a story with music, rather than as a musical show with a mere thread of story, and has shot it more or less straight, with the emphasis on its romantic and comedy values.

True, the story has been stepped up a bit as a " vehicle " for actress Anna Neagle. Nanette is not too busy hushing up the guilty past of her uncle (Roland Young) to have a maidenly love-life of her own. Two personable young men claim her heart. One is a painter, rugged, whimsical Richard Carlson. The other is a stage producer, tall, black-avised Victor Matlure. The odds, of course, are on the painter all the time, as will be readily divined by any student of screen sociology. The best of the original songs—" Tea for Two " and " I Want to be Happy "—are still in the score, and Miss Neagle has some dances, too, one in a dream sequence, which one feels must have tickled Mr. Wilcox's fancy. I had the impression, though, that a little more accent on the music, a little more pace and imagination in the treatment would have helped out the film enormously.

Turkey's late ruler Mustapha Kemal Ataturk, referred to Mussolini as a bull-frog, à propos La Fontaine's bull-frog which tried to be as big as a bull, and burst in the process. This BULL-FROG *appears in " Yellow Cæsar," ambles about and croaks, alternating with shots of the Duce.*

The DUCE *calls for comparison, standing side by side with a statue of his predecessor,* JULIUS CÆSAR, *great Roman soldier and statesman.*

Ponderous, swollen, Epsteinesque, this caricature of MUSSOLINI *was drawn by Feliks Topolski for the Duce's screen biography, " Yellow Cæsar," shortly to be released throughout the country. Produced by Cavalcanti, it shows how he set out to win an empire without cost to himself, always choosing featherweights as opponents. How, instead, he reduced Italy to a state of subservience, and how in the end Italy's revenge should be our opportunity. " Yellow Cæsar " is the third of Michael Balcon's propaganda " shorts " coming from Ealing Studios.*

Finally, just in case we are tempted by the week's comedies to forget that the world is a pretty serious place, the Plaza is offering us a documentary film called " THE WORLD IN FLAMES." This represents seventy minutes of screen journalism that is almost shattering in its effectiveness. In form it is an anthology, or a symposium, or whatever you like to call it, of newsreels shot by Paramount camera-men over the past twelve years. All the world's major happenings, political and military, from 1928 to the beginnings of the present war, are flashed in successive headlines before your eyes. Arranged so, and linked with an editorial commentary, they seem all the more significant, because each, at the time of shooting, was merely a record of a passing event. The camera-men who reported these scenes were not indulging in propaganda or polemics; they were just doing a normal job of work, often under difficult and dangerous conditions.

" The World in Flames " is American-made and primarily designed for American audiences. It is not open propaganda, but there is very little doubt of the effect it intends to create. It is a warning to the sleek and the smug and the thoughtless, a jolt to the easy-going patrons who don't look further in life than to the drug-store at the corner. It is a pretty grim jolt, too.

PORTRAIT BY HAY WRIGHTSON.

LAWN-TENNIS ACE WHO COMMANDS THE FRENCH A.T.S.

MADAME SIMONE MATHIEU, *the French lawn-tennis ace who so often appeared on the Centre Court at Wimbledon, is the Head of the Corps Féminin of General de Gaulle's Free French Forces, and holds the rank of Lieutenant. The Corps Féminin is now two months old and about one hundred strong. The volunteers, who are all of French nationality, come from every walk of life. They began their Army career by two weeks' training at a centre with hundreds of British A.T.S., and recently returned to London, where they work as secretaries, drivers, cooks, and orderlies. Madame Mathieu won the junior championship of France when she was eighteen. She won the French Ladies' Doubles and the Ladies' Doubles at Wimbledon in 1933. In 1934 she reached the semi-final of the Singles at Wimbledon. Her husband is an officer in General de Gaulle's army.*

SPRING IN THE PARK.

By THEODORA BENSON and BETTY ASKWITH,

Authors of "Foreigners; or the World in a Nutshell."

ILLUSTRATED BY TOPOLSKI.

ALONG the empty expanse of Rotten Row two dogs chased each other. We remembered as small children walking staidly beside our Nannies, watching enviously the not-so-well-brought-up children turning cartwheels over the smooth, flat-topped railings. We remembered as older children fidgeting beside the mounting-block, waiting for our first ponies, proud to become part of that lively throng of riders. We remembered as débutantes the stream of shiny cars pouring alongside the Row, taking us through the summer twilight to dine and to dance. (This was in the roaring period of the 'twenties, when we wore beaded frocks with waistlines round our hips and hems well above our knees.) We remembered Edwardian novels of fashion and flirtation and gossip among the gay, *mondaine* crowd watching the horses.

On Duty in the Park.

All gone now. Even the railings, with their rounded, shiny tops, which seemed so immutable. The curve of the Row stretched nobler and more melancholy without them. The two dogs, small and nondescript, were the only creatures in sight. Later, an officer came by, riding rather well on a white horse, and a hatless girl with dark curls cantered along with a riding-master. But the centre of life in the Park had shifted from the Row.

It had not shifted very far. Just a few yards to the line of dumps between the Row and the edge of the Park. The dumps in Hyde Park are impressive. A little rubble, a few bricks or slates, some trampled earth would be hideous and sordid; but here everything is on a grand scale. Here is a pile of rubbish so huge that twenty lorries perched on top of it look insignificant. Here is a whole landscape of broken brick and plaster and moulding; and here a noble pile of baths and cisterns. There is very little of the "human touch" around to sadden one and to remind one that those were once houses that people were fond of and were happy in. A battered "pram," completely flattened, an old kettle—that is all. Most of the human touches are new and therefore quite gay. Someone, for instance, had joined a lot of stuff together and made a perfectly senseless little house, exactly as children would do, exactly as the Never-Never-Land children did for Wendy. It looked very whimsy and as though it ought to be up a tree.

We walked all round the dumps. On the Row side, a machine with long, adjustable neck and vast jaws loaded bricks on to a lorry and looked amazingly like a megatherium or a diplodicus.

View of the guns in the Park.

We were pleased to see that someone was keeping fowls (a cock and six hens) and a pair of large, very pleased geese. Rabbit-hutches struck a cosy note, too, but were disappointingly empty. On the road side of the dumps there was great activity among soldiers with lorries, and there was a mobile canteen. This was the new centre of Park life.

"What are you looking at?" a soldier asked us as we gazed at the lorries cresting the rubble range.

"Just looking," we explained.

"Have a peep inside my lorry," he invited, "and then you'll see something what *is* worth looking at."

His mate broke in rather anxiously. "Go on—you ain't never going to show the girls all them awful pictures?" he protested.

But soldier No. 1 was aching to display his collection. So we looked inside the cab of his lorry and the whole wall-space was papered with a naïve gallery of girls. They were mostly photographs, pretty, some of them rather charming, and there were a few chalk sketches of girls, naked to the waist, with innocent doll faces, and—chief exhibit—a real David Wright girl from *The Sketch*.

"How do you like them?" our first friend asked eagerly, while No. 2 blushed.

We replied gravely, "They *are* artistic."

No. 2 was immensely relieved. "Well, they *are* nice, aren't they?" he said. "Any time you feel a bit fed up and low—well, you just take a look around at them, and there you *are*, if you know what I mean. It's like Heaven, eh?"

We went off feeling very glad that the dear boys had such simple happiness always at their command.

It wasn't only the soldiers who felt the influence of spring. The ducks were chasing each other on the Serpentine, the sparrows were fluffing out their new plumage, and two pigeons were locked beak to beak in a really ecstatic embrace. And there were snowdrops growing down the bank that leads to the little pond and a brilliant patch of yellow crocuses in the triangle between the Row and the Achilles statue.

On the crest of the rubble range.

There is a clock opposite there in the little house on the corner. One used to glance at it so often, rushing into the Park with mixed emotions, because the Achilles statue is quite a good place for romantic rendezvous. We looked at it automatically; but the face is smashed and the hands are gone. Odder still, there is an enormous crater in the "Baby Walk," splitting it right in two so that no perambulator could pass that way. It doesn't matter, of course, for there is no perambulator to pass.

Some men at work waved to us and whistled. Yes, it was emphatically spring. A couple lay embraced upon the grass. In spite of all that war can do to it, the Park is still itself to young lovers.

DESERTED BY CHILDREN AND BARE OF MODEL YACHTS: THE ROUND POND.

THE GIGANTIC MOUNTAIN RANGE OF BRICKS AND RUBBLE.

AN ARTIST VIEWS HYDE PARK AND KENSINGTON GARDENS IN WARTIME.

This week, FELIKS TOPOLSKI, *the Polish artist, visited the Park to record his wartime impressions of that centre of London life as it looks this spring. The grass is dotted with yellow, white and purple crocuses, the birds are preening themselves in March sunshine, but this is no ordinary spring. Where an expanse of green grass afforded exercise grounds for dogs, children and, on Saturday afternoons, for football teams, a huge mountain range of rubble and old iron—remains of London's bombed houses—now towers. There are no children or toy boats at the Round Pond. This transformation is described by the Hon. Theodora Benson and the Hon. Betty Askwith in an article on our facing page.* (DRAWINGS BY TOPOLSKI.)

WE TAKE OFF OUR HAT TO—

THESE MEMBERS OF THE MANSION HOUSE STAFF—*for getting front row "balcony stalls" to view the wedding reception of the Lord Mayor's daughter.*

MR. IGOR SIKORSKY—*for having designed a 'plane he can pilot in an "Anthony Eden" without danger of losing it.*

THE marriage of MISS EILEEN WILKINSON, only daughter of the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of London, to CAPTAIN J. MACNAUGHTON SIDEY, the Royal Tank Regiment, was followed by a reception at the Mansion House. Members of the staff knelt on the floor and looked down through the banisters at the festive scene. The bride wore a lovely pearl-tinted satin wedding dress and was attended by the bridegroom's twin sisters, the Misses Diana and Janet Sidey, in lily-of-the-valley green moiré.

MISS ANN DVORAK *(seen with "Chippy" Brown, of a Coast Guard Station)—for being a screen-star getting into the wartime picture with her pen.*

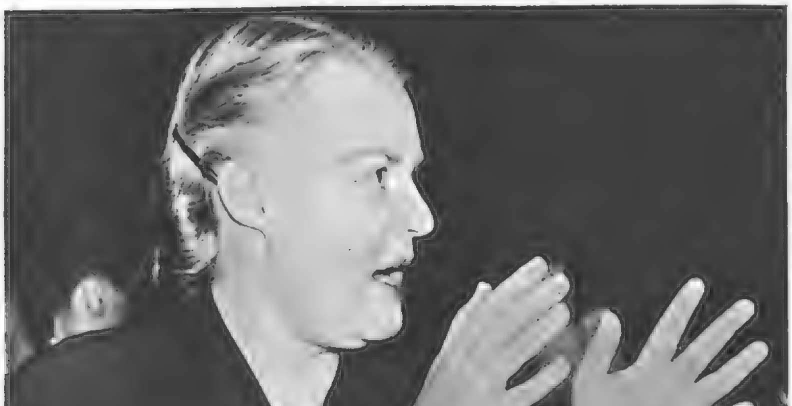
IN the HELICOPTER designed by MR. IGOR SIKORSKY the pilot sits in the open, but is protected from the rush of air in forward motion by the downward slipstream of the main rotor. For this reason Mr. Sikorsky can fly the VS 300 with his hat on, and the faster he goes, the better it sticks on.

ANN DVORAK, the screen-actress, has taken up a new career and is working as a newspaper correspondent. Our snapshot shows her with "Chippy" Brown, head of a Coastguard Station, who is giving her information about naval training for boys in an English "invasion village."

MR. GEORGE H. COSTIGAN, M.A. *(here seen with his wife,* DR. EITHNE BYRNE*)—for choosing a Professor of Romance Language for his bride.*

MR. GEORGE H. COSTIGAN, M.A., F.R.C.S., an Intelligence Officer in the R.A.F., married DR. EITHNE M. BYRNE, Professor of Romance Languages at University College, Cork, at the Church of Our Lady of the Assumption and St. Gregory, Warwick Street, London. Both bride and bridegroom are graduates of the National University of Ireland, and took their degrees in the same year.

OUR snapshot of MISS DOROTHY THOMPSON giving evidence before the Lease and Lend Bill Foreign Affairs Committee seems to indicate that her hands—unwittingly, no doubt—suggested her opinion of Nazi activities. She declared that Germany intends to eliminate the U.S.A. as a World Power by fomenting a civil war as soon as the country could be isolated from us.



MISS DOROTHY THOMPSON—*for the very expressive gesture which the camera has recorded her as apparently using when giving her opinion of Nazi activities.*

WHEN FLIGHT SERGEANT C. A. SAUNDERS, R.A.F., went to Buckingham Palace to be invested by his Majesty with the D.F.M., he brought his twin daughters, Jacqueline and Frances with him—but kept them on their leading-strings.

Right: FLIGHT SERGEANT C. A. SAUNDERS, D.F.M. *(here seen with* JACQUELINE *and* FRANCES*)—for keeping his daughters in leading-strings when he went to the Palace for the Investiture.*

R.A.F. FASHION PLATE.

Here's a study of the two gunners of a "Wellington" bomber helping each other to dress in their "hot suits" for a hazardous trip over enemy territory—the kind of journey which they make so frequently and so successfully these days! The picture was taken at a station in the Bomber Command, and gives a very good idea of the elaborate clothing necessary for such a flight. The lined leather garments, with gloves and boots en suite, are known as "hot suits," as they are electrically heated throughout.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CECIL BEATON.

MRS. KIPPS LONGS FOR A COSY LITTLE HOME!

PHYLLIS CALVERT *takes the part of Ann in the screen version of* "KIPPS." *She is his childhood's sweetheart, and he meets her again when he has become a rich man and she is a parlourmaid. He jilts his society fiancée, Helen, marries Ann, and makes her the mistress of a magnificent mansion in which she feels overpowered and miserable. The costumes and setting designed by Cecil Beaton are brilliantly successful evocations of the Edwardian period.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY CECIL BEATON.

KIPPS' GODDESS OF THE WOOD-CARVING CLASS.

DIANA WYNYARD *plays Helen Walsingham, cultured society girl and belle of Folkestone society in the screen version of* "KIPPS." *It will be remembered that Kipps meets her at the evening wood-carving class which he attends, and immediately falls a victim to her beauty and distinguished charm. In his shop-assistant days she is far above him socially, but when he unexpectedly comes into a fortune, the difference of class vanishes.*

THE ANAGRAM TEA-PARTY *given by an important Folkestone society hostess provides a most amusing sequence in the screen version of Wells's famous novel* "KIPPS," *which is being made at Shepherd's Bush, with costumes and décor by Cecil Beaton. Every guest wears a label bearing an anagram, and a good time is had by all, guessing the right word.* IRENE HANDL *is seen in the centre wearing a wonderful hat in full flower. She, it will be remembered, plays the Skittish Girl who makes such a set at Kipps.*

EDWARDIAN FUN AND GAMES EVOKED FOR "KIPPS"

PHOTOGRAPHS

Kipps (MICHAEL REDGRAVE) *and a shop-assistant friend take two girl-friends,* HERMIONE BADDELEY *and* BETTY ANN DAVIS, *out on their evening off, and sit down to listen to the band on Folkestone Parade. Alas! their innocent fun is spoiled by the fact that the ticket collector arrives and they have no money, so the party has to proceed to a free lecture. This may be pretty dull, but is a turning-point in Kipps's life, as he there meets Coote (Max Aitken), and his adventures begin.*

GRAND ANAGRAM TEA-PARTY AND BAND-STAND.

CIL BEATON.

LITERARY, ARTISTIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL:

The marriage of SEC. LIEUT. J. F. HARWOOD, *son of Sir Ralph and Lady Harwood, to* MISS EILEEN WINIFRED SMITH, *daughter of Mr. F. D. Smith, took place at West Grinstead Church.*

MRS. FULKE WALWYN, *wife of the well-known steeplechase rider, arranged to broadcast on March 9 on "Women and Wartime Racing." Our snapshot shows her at Plumpton with* MR. W. TAYLOR.

The HON. DEBORAH MITFORD, *youngest daught of Lord and Lady Redesdale, is engaged Sec. Lieut. Lord Andrew Cavendish, Coldstream Guards, younger son of the Duke and Duche s of Devonshire.*

"The Trial of Mary Dugan" was staged at a R.A.F. officers' hospital. Convalescent patients, nurses and W.A.A.F. officers, were in the cast, and Pilot Officer Basil Foster produced the show.

COLONEL DONOVAN, *American military and economic expert, will have a unique report to present to Mr. Roosevelt when he reaches the U.S.A., as during his tour of Europe at war he met and conversed confidentially with heads of States, Chiefs of Staffs, and naval and military commanders in over a dozen countries. In just over two months he has travelled 15,000 miles.*

MISS DAPHNE DU MAURIER, *author of "Rebecca," the novel, play and film chosen as the best picture of the year, is broadcasting to Canada and the U.S.A. on "The Spirit of Britain." With her (right) is a character from her book, "Come Wind, Come Weather," a bombed-out London grocer.*

WREN TALBOT, *daughter of Captain A. G. Talbot, D.S.O., R.N., joined the Women's Royal Naval Service as a clerk and then asked for a transfer to the Motor Transport Section to act as a motor-cycle dispatch-rider. Her mother is a W.R.N.S. officer.*

PEOPLE AND THEIR DOINGS RECORDED BY CAMERA.

Right: MR. W. S. MORRISON, *the P.M.G., who is also in charge of fire-fighting, inspected the new wheelbarrow pump which throws a jet of water 30 ft. and can be operated by one man, at a recent mammoth demonstration for fire-fighting chiefs.*

Left: *When* MR. JOHN WINANT, *newly-appointed American Ambassador to the Court of St. James's, landed at Bristol Airport he was met by H.R.H. the Duke of Kent; and when he reached the railway station to which he was conveyed by special train he received the signal honour of being welcomed on the platform by his Majesty the King.*

CLARE BOOTHE, *playwright wife of Henry R. Luce, publisher of "Time," inc., is the author of the successful play "The Women." Her latest book, "European Spring," is a striking record of an American woman's impression of our war attitude.*

MAJOR LORD GEORGE SCOTT *and* LADY GEORGE SCOTT *(formerly Molly Bishop) with their infant daughter,* GEORGINA MARY SCOTT. *She was christened by the Bishop of Lichfield at St. Andrew's, Weston-under-Lizard, Shifnal. Lord George Scott is the youngest brother of the Duchess of Gloucester.*

MISS PATRICIA UNITY RANK, *whose engagement to Mr. John P. Scrivener was recently announced, is here seen helping her mother,* MRS. ROWLAND RANK, *to pack comforts for the Services. Mrs. Rank, who is a member of the W.V.S., runs a comforts depôt for the three Services at her country home, Aldwick Place.*

WREN BARRINGTON-WARD *is one of the motor-cyclist dispatch-riders of the Women's Royal Naval Service who do such arduous and useful work carrying messages by road, through snow, rain, wind, and all sorts of weather. She is a daughter of Sir Lancelot Barrington-Ward.*

WREN FITZHERBERT WRIGHT *is one of the dispatch-riders for the Women's Royal Naval Service. Before the war she worked as a mannequin, and was one of the girls who played polo at Hurlingham in the happy, carefree days of peace.*

ANDRÉ RANDALL *as Mussolino, apparently still feeling bellicose as ever!*

DOUGLAS BYNG *sings " What the hell are we going to do with that moustache?"*

" A Night at the Circus," with

"STRIKE UP THE MUSIC," the new "revue of happiness" at the London Coliseum, lives up to its description, as it offers a programme compounded of spectacle, beauty, and wit combined with glorious examples of brilliant burlesque by Douglas Byng and André Randall, and other laughter-making scenes.

Right: The spectacular finale of " Land of the Sun."

" Land of Memories—Castle of Glass,"

"STRIKE UP THE

BEAUTY AND

Left: The Humble Bedroom of " The Sweepstake Winners' Dream," with some of the lucky girls.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY

OUGLAS BYNG *as the Queen of the Circus.*

DOUGLAS BYNG *as Doris, Goddess of the Wind, doing her stuff.*

ANDRÉ RANDALL *as Hitler delivering one of his most fulminating addresses.*

ith AGNETTE *and* SILVIO.

The photographs on these pages illustrate some of the well-contrasted numbers in "Strike Up the Music." "Land of Memories," a story of old France, is set in a crystal replica of an ancient castle; "Land of Musique" is a ballet in a new and modern choreography on Liszt music. Hella Toros, of Glyndebourne fame, is the vocalist.

Left: The Ball of Fortune from "The Sweepstake Winners' Dream."

MUSIC" WITH WIT,

BURLESQUE.

ight: HELLA TOROS, *with the Iris Loraine Ballet, in "Land of Musique—Ballet Bleu."*

ARBRICK STUDIOS.

THE SHOOTING OF "49TH PARALLEL," WITH NEW-STAR GLYNIS JOHNS.

The figures a-top the barren rock are an ESCAPED GERMAN U-BOAT CREW *in Canada. The rock will look more remote and craggy when seen on the screen.*

THE making of "49TH PARALLEL" is now in progress at Denham Studios, with Laurence Olivier and Glynis Johns as the stars. Miss Johns is the daughter of character-actor Mervyn Johns. Her rôle is that of a "Hutterite" farmer's daughter. "Hutterites," in case you don't know, are a German non-drinking, non-smoking brotherhood who farm plains near Winnipeg, and the story is an exciting affair, with clashes between German sailors and French-Canadian hero Laurence Olivier. Our photographs, taken on the set, give some idea of the business of producing a picture.

Seventeen-year-old GLYNIS JOHNS, *who took over the part relinquished by the Bergner, in the studio with a farm-scene scarecrow.*

"Grasp the 'phone like this . . . snatch it frantically. There's a man menacing you with a bayonet." DIRECTOR MICHAEL POWELL *acts his instructions.*

LAURENCE OLIVIER *shouts down the 'phone as a German* (BASIL APPLEBY) *attempts to bayonet him.* RAYMOND LOVELL *and* FINLAY CURRIE *are the figures on the left of this fine action picture.*

Author EINERICH PRESSBURGER *has a chat with leading-man* LAURENCE OLIVIER *on the set, during the shooting of "49th Parallel" at Denham. Mr. Olivier looks fine as the tough French-Canadian trapper in his checked shirt.*

LAURENCE OLIVIER *as the French-Canadian trapper, back to the post after a long trip, is staggered by the march of time as recorded by the calendar.*

THE LITERARY LOUNGER.

By L. P. HARTLEY.

"IMMORTAL EASE" is the story of a *femme fatale* who did not enjoy her rôle. Victoria Rising was a poet and a very beautiful woman. She married two men and tired of them; a third, after a short time spent in her society, painted her portrait in a novel called "The Ice-Cold Heart," and then committed suicide; but the fourth, Lloyd, the man who was in her life from the start, attracted her more than she attracted him. Perhaps all beautiful women take their beauty for granted: certainly Victoria did.

"Physical beauty," I said, "it is no credit to one. You get it at birth or with good conditions . . ."

Again—

"I always knew, Tory, that you would be a marvellous beauty."
"Oh, what is it worth?" I asked.

And again—

He [Fonsus Brade, the suicide] was not the only one who 'paid me attention.' I had always had more than my share of that from men and it meant nothing to me, no surfeit does. On the contrary, it is an ennui. I have always felt sorry for Helen of Troy, besieged, as she must have been by men and envied by women! No situation strips you barer. And there is nothing more exhausting to any woman than having a persistent lover in love with her when she is not in love with him.

We shall shortly see MRS. JOHN G. WINANT, *wife of the new U.S. Ambassador to Great Britain, in London, as she expects to follow her husband over very soon. Mrs. Winant shares his tastes and his passionate belief in democracy and all that the Allies are fighting for. They have two sons and one daughter. The new Ambassador had the honour of being met at the station by the King on his arrival here.*

A Troublesome Belief.

This must be true enough. That Victoria (Tory to her friends) does not add something like "though I say it as shouldn't" must be put down to frankness, not to vanity. She believed in truth and honesty, above all in the truth and honesty of the emotions. This belief brought a good deal of trouble to her, and to other people as well.

It is her troubles with which Miss Kathleen Coyle is chiefly concerned. "Immortal Ease" purports to be a biography, undertaken by an admiring friend who wished to clear Victoria's name from the scandals that were clinging to it. In point of fact, the bulk of the work is autobiography, a transcription of the journals that came so conveniently to the friend's hand. Victoria tells her own story, impelled to do so by the knowledge that her second husband, Robert Ilion, was planning to write it.

I was so afraid [she characteristically observes] that, being Robert, he would overload the virtues and make me out to be something that I was not. Scruples tormented me into notes, and before I knew I found myself engaged upon my childhood. I began it in the spirit of an apology, a true *apologia pro vita sua*, an argument that would discover why I was what I was.

What *was* Victoria? Not, perhaps, a very uncommon type of woman, certainly a type often met with in novels. Her chief aim was to get the greatest possible emotional satisfaction out of life. This ambition she represented to herself as emotional honesty: it would not be honest to stay with Tony Rising after she had ceased to love him, or with Robert Ilion after she had ceased to love him. She did not owe much to the first, except her son Carl; she owed a great deal to Robert, who had rescued her from a kind of doldrums of the spirit which threatened to be chronic; she owed something to the step-children who had welcomed her so warmly. All these obligations were as the sound of lyres and flutes when the magnetic needle of her being turned to Lloyd; and it was only when another polarity discovered itself, the son to whom for many years she had hardly given a thought, that the needle began to waver, then to swing frantically, dictating the amazing series of events with which the story closes.

Pitched Too High.

"Immortal Ease" is a difficult novel to describe. It is emotional and intellectual, simple and sophisticated. The opening scene, in which Victoria makes the acquaintance, in their Irish country home, of the Emmot family, who are to play such an important part in her life, is magnificent. The effect, at once bewildering and stimulating, of a totally new environment on the nature of an unusually highly-strung and passionate child could not be better conveyed. The visit tingles with the feeling of adventure and expectancy, with the sense of life raised to the highest pitch. Miss Coyle's mistake, I think, is to make this temperature, this fever of experience, last through the whole book, and to represent nearly all the characters as capable of it. To be sure, they are all seen through Victoria's eyes, and in terms of her own spiritual hyperæsthesia, but there should have been portraits painted in a lower tone, episodes less effervescent with significance, to make the others stand out—especially since the story is meant to describe an ascending curve of emotional excitement. To increase the tension, Miss Coyle first resorts, very effectively, to drama: the moment of Victoria's disappearance is wonderfully timed and utterly unexpected. Not content with that, she gives the screw a further turn, and we have the amazing melodrama of the scenes round Mrs. Emmot's sick-bed and the revelation, surely too long delayed, that Lloyd's "greatness" was a form of satanism. If these scenes had been the product of a fantastic imagination, we could believe in them; but Miss Coyle's imagination, like her heroine's, is essentially realistic; and while we cannot fail to be impressed by the unbraiding of the hair, we feel at the same time painfully conscious of the unwisdom of doing it in front of a sick woman, who surely should not have been exposed to all these histrionics.

Stupid, but Not Dull.

Miss Mary Mitchell also writes about a beautiful woman. But Caroline Folyot, daughter of Sir Hubert Folyot, whose baronetcy dated from the fifteenth century (surely this is a slip), was as stupid as she was beautiful; and whereas beauty vanishes, beauty passes, stupidity has a way of increasing with the years. To make a merely stupid woman the central figure of a novel would be to court disaster; there is no way of suggesting dullness except by dullness, and no one could endure three hundred pages of dull remarks. To convey the effect of beauty by the written word is far from easy (Miss Coyle errs by insisting too much on Victoria's); to convey the effect of dullness is only too easy. Realising this, Miss Mary Mitchell makes Caroline not only stupid, but jealous, platitudinous, insincere, ill-natured, and self-complacent; and her conversation, because it reflects these qualities, is seldom dull.

MRS. GEORGE RENDEL, *wife of the British Minister in Bulgaria who delivered a historic warning to that country before the entry of the German troops, is helping to run the Catholic Women's canteen at St. Peter's Hall, near Westminster Cathedral. She came back from Sofia to look after her seventeen-year-old daughter Rosemary and her son Peter, and is expecting her husband over here very soon and her other daughter, Anne, who joined her father in Bulgaria.*

A Contrast.

She is contrasted, and very cleverly contrasted, with her children's governess. She had married, late, an extremely successful doctor, the only man whose appreciation of her beauty had survived the boredom of her conversation;

[*Continued overleaf.*

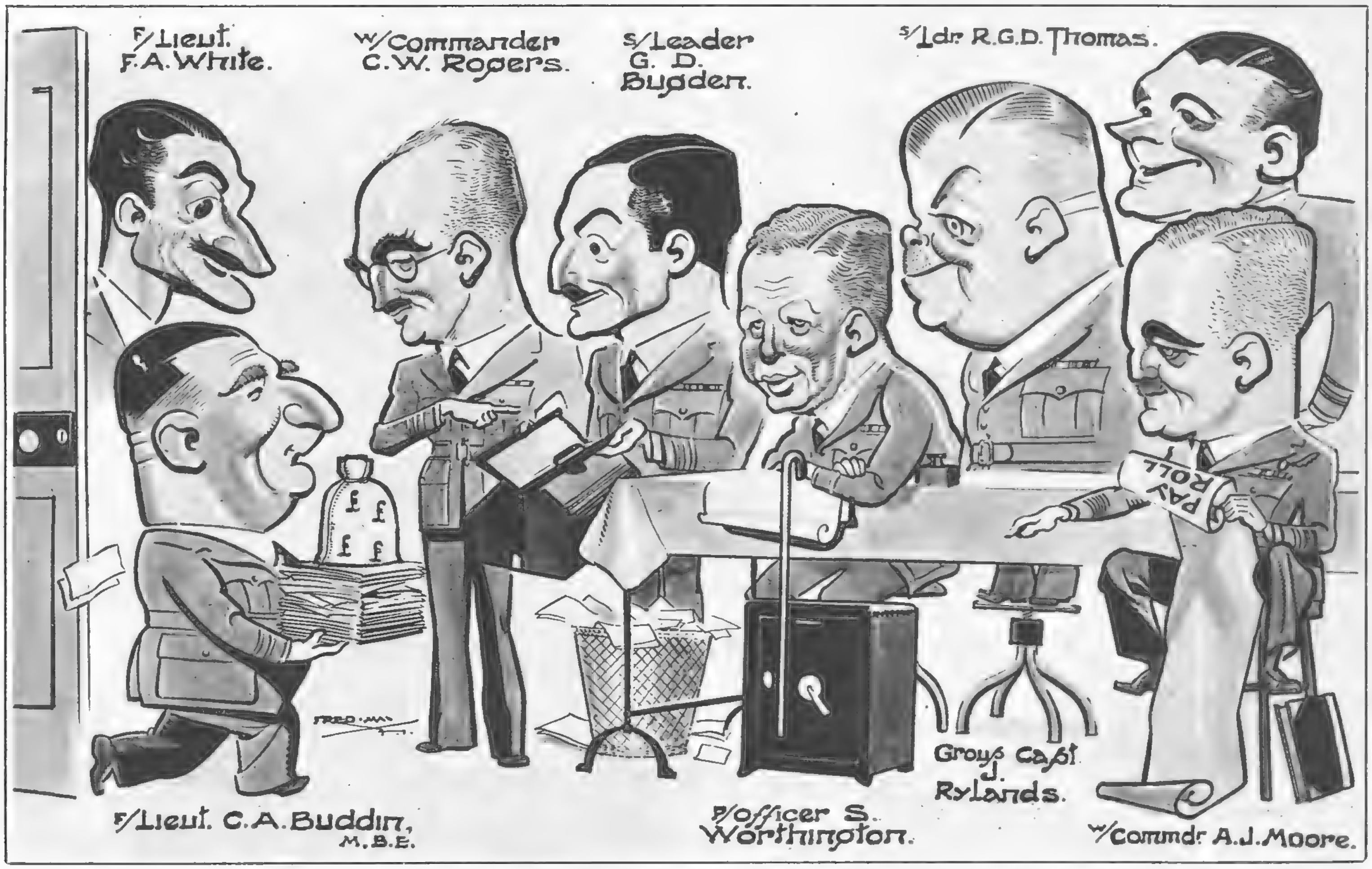
Continued.]
and even he was fast tiring of her. Comfortable though their home was in the material sense, no governess would stay with them; but Thérèse Raimbaud had the patience of a young Frenchwoman anxious to collect money for a *dot*; and she was intelligent enough to see through Caroline's insincerity without being unduly irritated by it. Moreover, she was extremely fond of children, and the Trevannick children repaid attention. And she had another, stronger reason for wanting to stay: she had fallen in love with Caroline's brother, an impecunious young man unable to offer her marriage. So she bore with "Madame's" patronising airs and tried to bear with her next manœuvre: pretended jealousy of her husband's attitude towards the girl. But here Thérèse broke down: and the result was the incident in the kitchen with the curry-powder and the chopper.

Miss Mitchell's method recalls that of Mrs. Belloc Lowndes: with small, patient, realistic touches she builds up a situation which can only end in catastrophe. We feel it coming and cannot avert it. But when the catastrophe comes, it is a rather inconclusive affair—as indeed it might be in life—about which the reader's feelings are slightly mixed; and the police inquiry, very well described, seems a little lame for the same reason. Miss Mitchell had an excellent idea, but she slightly fumbles it. We feel her intelligence taking control, rather than her art or her instinct. The last part of "Stupidity's Harvest" is less absorbing than the first, but this does not prevent the whole from being well above the average in subtlety and interest.

Golfer and Journalist. Mr. Henry Longhurst's name must be well known to most people who play golf, or read about it, or listen to accounts of it on the wireless. Like Mr. Bernard Darwin, to whom he devotes a chapter of "It Was Good While It Lasted," he acts as a kind of liaison officer between golf and literature. His style is not so literary as Mr. Darwin's; it has less suavity and more snap; but it is a good style, admirably adapted for telling a "story," whether in the ordinary or the journalistic sense of the word. He does not, like Mr. Darwin, quote Dickens; but Dr. Johnson and Sydney Smith (the latter his hero among men of letters) help to enliven pages which are lively enough already. His survey of sport goes beyond golf, of which, in his Cambridge days, he was already an acknowledged master; it includes boxing, mountaineering, ski-ing, tobogganing; he knows all the ins and outs of sport, including those aspects of it which, to the purist, do not seem quite sporting; and its financial side affords him many entertaining passages. Like most eminent sportsmen, he is also something of a cosmopolitan: he took two teams over to America; he went to Berlin and had a talk with "Little Willie." His conversations—and few people can have a wider range of acquaintance—never read like interviews; they are delightfully spontaneous and often witty. His tolerance is as wide as his acquaintance, and there is hardly a priggish or undeservedly uncharitable sentence in his book: which is saying something when we remember that as a golfer he was subject to what must be the very embarrassing attentions of admiring crowds. He is never short of opinions—a great asset in a book of this kind—and he states them, as he states everything, with considerable frankness. This freedom of expression is very welcome just now, and adds to the larger value, as well as the entertainment value, of a most enjoyable book.

A Detective's Handicap. Miss Allingham has essayed a difficult task, and her success is the more noteworthy on that account. In "Traitor's Purse" she not only writes of the present war, but attempts that well-known *mauvais pas*—the peril of colossal dimensions hanging over England. This situation has proved the undoing of so many authors that Miss Allingham's skill in avoiding nearly all the pitfalls is the more to be praised. The traitor's scheme is so magnificently simple that she makes us believe in its possibility and hence in its terror.

Habitués of crime fiction are getting used to detectives with limitations—detectives with scarcely more brains than the regular police, detectives with no qualities except a capacity for hard work, detectives who are physically blind and more who are mentally so—but Miss Allingham has the honour of presenting us with the first detective to suffer from concussion through the first four-fifths of the book. A distinguished style, marked by economy of phrase and high finish, adds greatly to the enjoyment of "Traitor's Purse."



Our artist was detailed this week to visit the ACCOUNTS BRANCH OF THE R.A.F., *and although he "got no change" out of them, he managed to make a few caricatures.* (CARICATURES BY FRED MAY.)

BOOKS REVIEWED.

Immortal Ease. By Kathleen Coyle. (*Gollancz*; 9s.)
Stupidity's Harvest. By Mary Mitchell. (*Methuen*; 8s.)
It Was Good While It Lasted. By Henry Longhurst. (*Dent*; 15s.)
Traitor's Purse. By Margery Allingham. (*Heinemann*; 8s.)

The sixth of our NEW SERIES OF PLATES IN FULL COLOUR BY DAVID WRIGHT is published in this issue of "THE SKETCH."

"CHRISTMAS IN JULY" FROLIC WITH DICK POWELL AND ELLEN DREW.

ELLEN DREW *and* DICK POWELL *play Jimmy and Betty, the hero and heroine of* "CHRISTMAS IN JULY."

Jimmy and Betty haven't enough money to marry, but Jimmy believes he'll win a contest and get rich quick.

Mr. Baxter (ERNEST TRUEX), *head of the coffee firm for which Jimmy works, receives a kiss of gratitude from Betty.*

Jimmy's slogan for selling coffee has won the 25,000-dollar prize—at least, he thinks so. Hence Betty gets a swell ring.

Dr. Maxton (RAYMOND WALBURN) *tears up the cheque which Jimmy was given under a misapprehension, while Betty watches sadly.*

Jimmy and Betty with the cheque for 25,000 dollars, which isn't quite as good as it looks.

"CHRISTMAS IN JULY," due at the Plaza on March 14, is a frolicsome farce directed by Preston Sturges, of "Down Went McGinty" fame. Jimmy is hoaxed into thinking he has won a coffee-selling slogan contest prize of 25,000 dollars, and receives the cheque. He and Betty embark on a spending spree and bring Christmas in July to all their circle by gift-buying. The hoax is discovered after the presents have been distributed and Jimmy's in a jam. Betty's ingenuity gets him out.

CITY NOTES.

OUR STROLLER IN THROGMORTON STREET.

"SIX pounds a week: that 's what he is getting. Fire-spotting pays better than whole-time A.R.P. work."

"Nearly twice as well: not quite; but the difference is worth having."

"An Army officer living next to me, with a total disability pension for shell-shock in the last war, has got a clerking job in a local company at three pounds a week. I don't know whether he pays Income Tax on any of it."

"I suppose that tax-free shares are popular just now? Are any to be bought?"

"You can find them here and there. Vickers five per cent. tax-free preference are a better market than eggs or oranges."

"They are tax free only up to six shillings in the pound; with an eight-and-sixpenny tax, there is the odd half-crown that 's liable."

"Guest Keen first and second preference are entirely tax free, I believe."

"That 's right. You can generally deal in them if you want to. The Firsts are a safe security, to my mind. The Seconds are good enough for most of us, I should say. Not so safe as the Firsts, of course."

"Globe Telegraph and Trust ordinary shares get their dividends free of tax, don't they? Paid quarterly, too."

"Imperial Tobacco is another company that pays its dividends net, and you get a good yield from the shares."

"You can't be certain that any ordinary shares will have the dividends paid free of tax for all eternity. Bristol Trams got eight per cent. tax free for 1939, but the dividend for 1940 was eight per cent. less tax. Naturally enough, the price went back as a result. But the Imperial Tobacco Company——"

"Will go on paying tax free, I guess. Mind you, I 'm only guessing. And so, I should imagine, will Globe Telegraph and Trust. You might see a reduction in the rate, though, if Income Tax goes up again."

"Looks as if we shall have to tighten our belts, doesn't it? Still, we are to be allowed more butter this month, you know."

"You can get a jolly nice lunch at plenty of restaurants in the West End. They will give you a 'rill mill,' and you can take your choice as to what you pay. It depends upon where you go. My modest lunch stands me in at either side of an eighth in Throgmorton Street."

"If Income Tax is increased, I shall be forced into Home Railway stocks. I have lost too much money over them in the past for me to feel any great friendliness towards them now."

"I know crowds of people who have the same sort of prejudice. But Great Westerns will pay you 10 per cent. So will Southern preferred and Brum 1923 pref. Berwick Second pref. you can buy to yield something like fifteen per cent."

"Didn't I see some hint the other day about possible nationalisation? Wouldn't that be bad for the bull?"

"George Stephenson said 'Bad for the coo,' you may remember. Nationalisation is a cry we 've heard for years. If you 're out for high yields, you must take corresponding risks."

"On National War Bonds or Saving Certificates, you do make sure of getting your money back intact."

"So you do with Savings Bonds and Defence Threes. Lower yields are the price you pay for safety-*cum*-patriotism."

"You mean to say I ought to deny myself the luxury—or the necessity—of getting better interest than the Government loans give?"

"I don't mean to say anything of the sort. By all means buy London Passenger Transport 'C,' or Cable and Wireless preference, or the tax-free shares we 've been talking about. But as to speculation, I don't see my way clearly enough to give you tips."

"Then you wouldn't advise me to buy oil shares?"

"If you keep to Shell, Burmah, Trinidad Leasehold, and that type of share, I think you will have no cause for regrets. You may have to put patience with your certificates, though."

"Not very encouraging, are you?"

"Too bad! Here am I doing my best, to my own disadvantage, to encourage you to walk in the prudent path, and you reproach me with a kind of financial turp—turp—— What is the word I want?"

"Turpentine?"

"Yes, that 's it. Turpitude. By the way, have you got any money? You told me the other day that you will have to sell your dress-suit in order to buy offal, and you suggested bartering your gold watch for an onion."

"I 've put all I can afford into the national loans, and now I 'm after a compensatory income. Don't tell me to go fire-watching at six pounds a week. I 'd rather do that voluntarily."

"Stout fellow! No, I was going to say you will get handsome yields from the Malayan tin shares. The price of tin has been rushing up, and tin shares haven't responded so much as a Straits dollar."

"What about Japan?"

"Ah, there 's the snag. But I 'd love to have a go at that market if I could afford to risk the money. How much have you got?"

Our Stroller produced a handful of silver. He laid the coins on a blotting-pad.

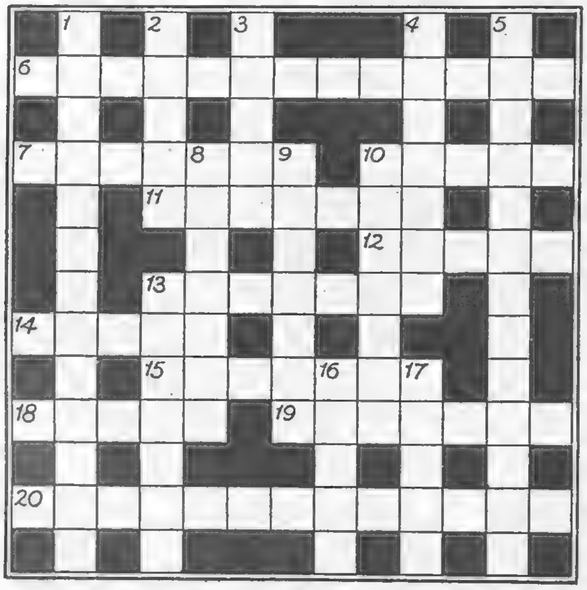
"Oh, good!" exclaimed the broker. "You 're a bloated millionaire. Let me see: another couple of pounds, and we could almost go to lunch up West. And have a taxi each way."

"It 's up to you," Our Stroller invited. "But if we haven't the other two pounds——"

"All right," sighed the broker. "As that 's the case, we had better go and support the brewery market. *Marchons, mon brave!*"

Friday, March 7, 1941.

"THE SKETCH" CROSS-WORD.



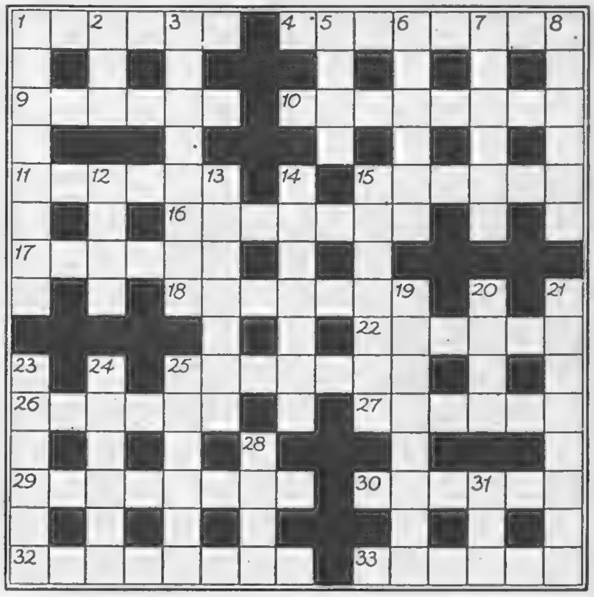
ACROSS.

6. Descriptive of a certain kind of Scottish cake (three words; 5, 3, 5).
7. It might be wholly—or in part—to submit (7).
10. No doubt the old-time prisoners in the dungeons of the Tower heard this often (5).
11. No; this artery is not found only in No. 8 Down (7).
12. A machine designed to rob the working man (5).
13. "Swat a P.C." (anag.; 7).
14. One of the lesser seats of learning, in a manner of speaking (5).
15. Always in a colour it is to be held in the highest esteem (7).
18. Here, of course, this word is this word (5).
19. Such an outlook is not comparable with a will to win (7).
20. A suitable statue to commemorate the work of the R.A.F. (two words; 6, 7).

DOWN.

1. Was the production of this famous play a failure financially? (four words; 3, 4, 2, 4).
2. This is not the kind of voice usually associated with No. 8 Down (5).
3. An animal takes precedence of many in this quarter of the East (5).
4. This bird seems to behave in a piggish manner when it loses its head (7).
5. Good advice to the loose-tongued in wartime (four words; 2, 2, 4, 5).
8. Apparently there is something of the old Adam in these daughters of Eve (7).
9. "Do stare" (anag.; 7).
10. The suggested absorption of a distinguished artist in his Oriental mount is just sweet (7).
13. Oh, no, Sir! This part of a woman's attire did not have its origin in what might be termed rude times (7).
16. He was regarded as a good fellow in olden days (5).
17. A passing phase (5).

"THE SKETCH" DIFFICULT CROSS-WORD.



ACROSS.

1. If this bird loses her head, she turns to her adorer: when he 's executed, it 's all over with him (6).
4. You won't find this instrument in a Nazi orchestra (two words; 4, 4).
9. Makes motorists pause (6).
10. Courting this doesn't mean getting engaged (8).
11. Frank avowal of ability and past performance (6).
15. Playwright: no pious emperor (6).
16. Such an address won't find the tongue-tied at home (7).
17. Form of prayer (6).
18. To make a song about a vehicle is enough to give you a fright (7).
22. Not the stuff heroes are made of (6).
25. Disappointed if he doesn't win the rubber? (7).
26. Entrance—for wine to judge from most of it (6).
27. Garden laid out differently (6).
29. Opposite of progress (8).
30. Bit of fish and a drink to finish up with (6).
32. Melancholia in the Cavalry? (two words; 3, 5).
33. Charming thing to wear (6).

DOWN.

1. The secretary does not insist on a personal visit when he invites you to do this (three words; 3, 1, 4).
2. Bird in low life (3).
3. May be soon time for these (8).
5. The part of a Seville orange that 's no good (4).
6. Half a dozen in nine inches may mean trouble for your gee (6).
7. Composition that is mostly a couple of articles (6).
8. Forgive a fellow being below par (6).
12. When these fruits fall off, is it because they have been hanging by a thread? (4).
13. Familiar to the electrician and preferred by the monk (two words; 3, 4).
14. A glaring fault (7).
15. A lecturer is accustomed to handling this dog (7).
19. This plant can't be appreciated by pheasant breeders: if spread about, it will ruin game (8).
20. Dress up (4).
21. American President about to die and slope (8).
23. Sort of moral energy the T.T. by no means despises (6).
24. You can't keep sheep in this fold (6).
25. A staple product (6).
28. To drill is a wearisome occupation (4).
31. How about everything? (3).

"Correct, sir?"

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MARCH winds are uncertain, and an extra jacket helps to temper them to your first spring frock. Swan and Edgar, Piccadilly Circus, have the house dress above in a fine woollen material, made in clear, vivid colours. Three rows of buttons on the frock are repeated on the short coat with its cut-away front, shown in the picture on the right. In the same department they have a youthful-looking pinafore dress, buttoning down the back and worn over a spotted blouse, which costs only two guineas.

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NO SECOND MISTAKE.*

By "WING-SLIP."

EX-GROUP COMMANDER MAJOR HAUPT'S chubby features remained suitably grave. He was bearing with his anonymous Chief's valedictory. Haupt was sure the old fool's eyes conveyed warning and his tone a threat. What a lot of pother about a job fit only for a soldier of the line! Casually, as though talking to a porter, the Chief continued: ". . . your preparation has made you fit and has altogether eliminated that common denominator of democracy and disaster, Major—*human weakness*."

Haupt bowed, a hint of stiffness in his bulky frame, his genial tone tinged with impatience. "Thank you."

The Chief allowed his fingers to walk over the files under his left hand. "When you applied for this work you had been cashiered from the *Luftwaffe*: cheque incidents. Your background: air-smuggling, selling film rentals. Well turned out. Taste in ties. Conducted Youth parties to London. Interpreted at British Industries Fairs. That you know only Germany and Britain obviates coincidental recognition!" The Chief smiled tiredly. Haupt was annoyed. Perhaps the Chief thought he was talking in kindergarten. The elder man rose, stepped around the desk and extended his sleeve.

"Feel that. *Ersatz.* A suit nobody would look at twice. Be ordinary—be a tramp, if you like—but don't go to the King's Cross Station or the Chelsea Soldiers' Barracks in topper and tails, like best-seller Possendorf's 'secret agents.'" The Chief tapped his files insultingly. "That's your weakness. I must not refrain from pointing that out to you."

Haupt bowed stiffly again. "Be assured. I shall not deviate from your instructions, Herr Chief."

The old man nodded and waved Haupt to the door. "Yes. Yes. Doubtless. You will make no second mistake."

Haupt smiled soberly. "I'll make no first mistake."

Back at his flat the Group Commander distastefully changed into enemy clothing. Rough cotton underwear, shirt and collar. He squirmed uneasily into the worsted suit. Heavy woollen socks. Rubber-soled brogues. Just what the well-dressed Englishman doesn't wear. Permitting himself a little bad language, Haupt would have found great satisfaction in stuffing the bowler-hat into the teeth of his Most High Intelligence, the pompous old Chief-sneak.

Coloured elastic rings. He discovered they were meant to restrain the untailored shirt-sleeves. He changed his triple-lined gabardine for a clammy navy blue mackintosh of Manchester origin. He carefully treed his town and house shoes and lined up neatly his prized collection of boots. Then he glanced regretfully at eleven ties, "exclusive creations," and angrily threw pins, clasps, rings and watch into the wall-safe. The provided suitcase was complete with in-built transmitter and a scant change of underclothing. He left his keys with the Chief. He avoided airmen friends at Tempelhofer and took his seat feeling like a scarecrow.

On the way down to the Boulogne base it took him some time to get used to feeling a wartime pilot at the column. Staff officers glowered at him. One, his jacket atrociously fitting, whispered about "Party freaks."

Haupt tried to relax. It was a cardinal mistake: sending the "best-dressed man in Berlin" to waste intelligence against police and railway underlings. Clothes and bearing mattered. He felt assured that he was fitted for diplomatic rather than merely military espionage. If the Chief thought a flair for impressing women was of no value, he had a lot to learn. Haupt felt that even thus attired he had that something that hall-marked the man of nice discrimination.

As the 'plane bumped over the field near the base Haupt resolved that if opportunity approached he would restore his commission, gain prestige and promotion. He would do something startling, give play to his attainments.

Half an hour before the following dawn, four "88s" ran in over Finchley at intervals and stirred up the *Flak*. Haupt's pilot drifted his "Storch" over farmland, dropped him from 600 ft., and hoped he broke his neck. The stirred-up "cover" almost took his machine apart.

The Group Commander landed expertly, stuffed the light parachute into his case, scuffed the clay from his boots, straightened his tie, and made sure of his "identity card." He then slung his gas-mask case comfortably and set out for a bus route.

He was tickled to find that the "Bed and Breakfast" lady had never "bothered" to keep a register. Not that it mattered. He even offered to go out and get her one.

He visited railway stations and the offices of common carriers, ostensibly to complain about delay in package deliveries. A genial grin and a few hail-fellow-well-met questions placed bomb damage within a mile or so on road and rail. Bus and tram rides during raids enabled him to memorise a map of the majority of fixed *Flak* positions. A duck-like "Storch" flew several runs over a selected area each night to receive his coded defence details.

One afternoon he threw the clothes-brush exasperatedly to the floor of his lodgings. If he stayed on this trivial job it was only a matter of time before that hellish *Flak* bounced an "88" off its aim and an undiscriminating missile hit the one man who was not permitted to take shelter. It would not hit those fools next door who played a gramophone during raids. He shuddered. He stood a moment, flicking cotton from his sleeve, and then smiled cynically. An aerodrome of the Metropolitan Fighter Command might reveal operations detail that might enable the *Lufwaffe* to end the air war conclusively and at the same time make London safe for an intelligent German man to shop in.

Within a few minutes he was 'phoning Brief Sound Pictures, Ltd. "My name is Turner—John George Turner. I'm well connected among the A.-A. H.Q.s and the Balloon squadrons; but I just heard that the Fighter people at Hinton are keen on films for the troops. With your brochures and prices I'm sure I can rent your productions. I need a letter to get me past the gatekeeper. You know what those chaps are if you try to go through unaccompanied by an officer!"

Judging by his tone, Mr. Fakackerly, the manager, was interested. "Good! Splendid! We need to rent films to somebody these days! Look here—we are closed this afternoon, Saturday. If you had rung five minutes later I'd have been gone. Come to 191, Byron Gardens, N.W.6."

Mr. Fakackerly was no personality. Haupt spread his legs. Off-handedly he mentioned the adjutants of several battalions. Talking film-rentals, he privily thanked the Chief for the long and maddening repetitions of "Major Scotland, 5th Bat.—Major Heslop, 2nd Bat.—Major Hawkins, 1st Bat. . . ." He had memorised their idiosyncrasies. His incomparable "connection" was indeed a disarming weapon.

Mrs. Fakackerly was placidly knitting. Haupt strangled a yawn. The pair were dull. He'd show them how to sell films. The maid was dull, too. She was dark, spoke hesitant, painstaking English: about seventeen or eighteen. She wore no uniform. There was a query in Haupt's eyes. Mr. Fakackerly grudgingly introduced them. "This is Mary, our little Czechoslovak refugee. Never been outside her own country before. She has learned English pretty quickly, eh? Splendid, I think."

Haupt started at the word "Czechoslovak," and then breathed relievedly. No possibility of recognition. She'd never been to Germany. She smiled as though thinking of something she could not forget, sombrely. "Yes. I hope to become a school-teacher when I go back to my own country. I am learning French and Italiane-ish also." Haupt stuck his tongue in his cheek to hold back a grin. Very funny, that "Italiane-ish also."

During the discussion of terms and titles the Group Commander was conscious of her regard. He turned his head and chanced a smile. What was this if not an interesting possibility? Her earnest sloe-black eyes disclosed horror, wonder and gratitude. It was natural that she should know intuitively that he was out of the common run of man. Nor was he altogether unpresentable. His tie was fresh and cool, a foulard with a delicately-suggested lilac stripe, enchanting and, to his mind, not overdone.

Mr. Fakackerly frowned. His topic was in the air. Mary served tea and leaned toward Haupt appreciatively. "I like your tie." Haupt grinned. His chubby cheeks warmed. She added, "You please excuse me." She rubbed the silk between her finger and thumb and examined the lining. "I have not felt s-such smooth mat-er-I-al for a long time." Her proximity was agreeable. Anything to distract the child—my little Sabine—thought Haupt. He wondered if the "Bed and Breakfast" lady ever "bothered" about one's lady friends. Mrs. Fakackerly knitted faster, lips pursed. The pedestrian Mr. Fakackerly seemed puzzled. He then sat upright in his chair, head trembling in disapproval—most unamiable, the old fool.

Haupt astutely eased the tension by raising the question of expenses. Nicely-printed pound-notes were the last thing he was likely to be short of—but there is nothing like a little tug-of-war to convince a business man and turn his mind from the more pliable sex. Fakackerly and his precious refugee!

Mary sat down at Haupt's elbow with text-books and foolscap. Arguing pleasantly but firmly with his host, Haupt was gratified to observe that Mary's mind was not on verbs. That high gravity

[*Continued overleaf.*

* *All the characters and incidents in this story are imaginary.*

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By D. L. MAYS

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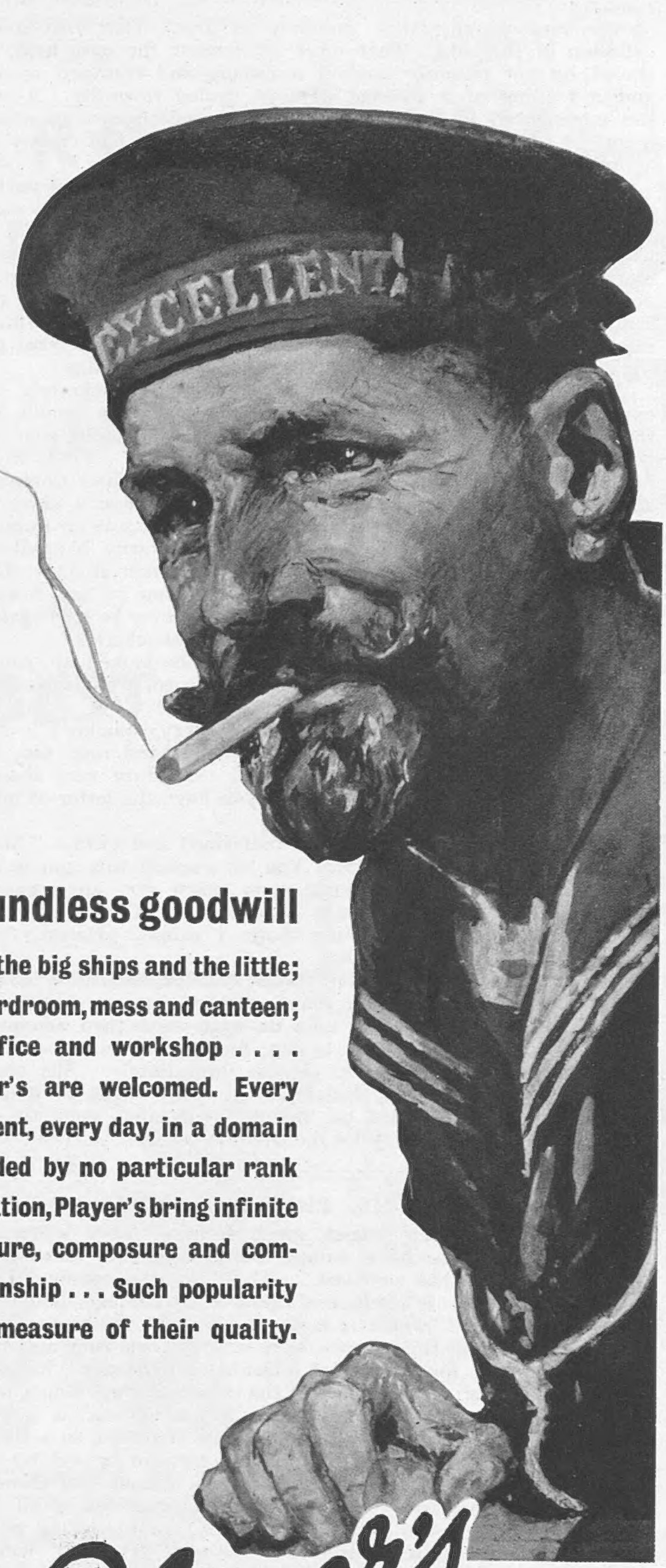

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Continued.]
of the very young, fallen suddenly in love. That rosy-golden suffusion of the skin. That inner excitement the eyes held, betrayed by her patently aimless scribbling and confused reading and re-reading of a passage. Haupt smiled inwardly. A man less experienced in the high art of understanding young women might go out of the house never knowing that he had crassly left a broken heart at 191, Byron Gardens.

An apartment might be nice. Once a young girl started putting pictures straight and rearranging cushions—as they inevitably did—the rest followed as "R.D." followed cheques. She could be useful, too. Provided she were given a little tactful guidance in matters of raiment, her ingenuousness might open many guarded doors. His acumen and presence would assure the highest percentage of result from those contacts. Cabinet Ministers, for instance, might have conversational possibilities—and who knows what personal charm and an air cannot do in the way of espionage?

With well-simulated ill grace he accepted Fakackerly's "no expenses" terms. Not Mr. Fakackerly, but Britain would foot the bill! The "charming Mrs. John Turner" should have the best that little shop near here could provide. First things first, however. He must get this Metropolitan Fighter Command aerodrome project completed. He would then have a clear run up to a larger target. Mary was amusing—but he was no woman's fool. How many clever men had been temporarily blacked-out, as it were, and brought down by taking a woman along? They were just drag in this game. Drag—by the time he was finished with Mary she 'd slide so far into limbo she 'd never be seen again—at least, not with staid people like these Fakackerlys.

Haupt gave a sly tug at Mary's frock. She looked up, caught her master's eye, gasped and fled. They heard, from somewhere in what Haupt guessed was the kitchen, "Oh! It is nearly two o'clock. I must to buy food for the canary, quickly!" Mrs. Fakackerly followed to the kitchen. Her husband rose, too, and excused himself. "I 'm a Home Guard. On duty very shortly. I 'll get you some brochures. I 'll let you have the letter of introduction first post Monday."

He returned in a few moments, uniformed and grim. "Stand up, Mr. Turner. That 's right. You 've guessed this gun is real enough. You certainly do look nasty when you are cornered. Little revolver in your breast pocket, eh? Good. Splendid. Nobody would think of looking there, I think." Haupt's bulk seemed to shrink in his clothes.

Mr. Fakackerly, astonished but plainly relieved, chided the panting Group Commander. "When Mary shocked my good lady by being familiar with you and then on edge—and then astounded me by saying she was going to buy food for a canary—I can't abide *canaries*—I asked her to explain immediately. She placed this gun in my fist. She declares—and Mary ought to know—that although you snipped off the garment label, your tie was made in her father's factory for the German market!" [THE END.

DEBRETT'S, PEERAGE, 1941.

"WARS have been waged, great Empires have fallen and new Powers have arisen, but throughout these world upheavals Debrett has survived." These are the opening words in the 1941 edition of "Debrett's Peerage, Baronetage, Knightage and Companionage," which is now on sale, and the preface goes on to point out that though they were written some time ago, they hold good to-day, for in spite of difficulties, "Debrett" has duly appeared this year, and in view of the many changes which must occur in the history of families during a year of war, it is more indispensable than ever. But not only does it record, in a special Roll of Honour, the alterations in titled families caused by war casualties, it also lists happier changes, for a special War Honours Supplement is now included, which gives biographies of all who have been awarded the D.S.O. and the V.C. Interesting points which are referred to in the preface to the new "Debrett" include references to the institution by his Majesty of the George Cross, the new honour for civilians, and to the approval by the College of Arms of the new Astral Crown. This device has wings and stars alternating over the head-band, and distinguished officers of the R.A.F. and individuals connected with aviation may have it incorporated in a grant of armorial bearings, and it can also be included in badges of the various units of the Air Force. There has been a Naval Crown for many years past which is to be found in the crests of Lord Nelson and Lord Jellicoe, and also forms part of the badge granted in 1918 to the Mercantile Marine. To revert to war casualties, "Debrett" records that at the time of going to press four peers, one baronet and fourteen heirs to titles had been killed on active service. Through the death of Lieutenant Frederick R. Alexander Lewin, Irish Guards, only grandchild of the famous Field-Marshal Lord Roberts, the title becomes extinct. When his only son was killed, a special remainder allowing the title to go through the female line was granted, but with Mr. Lewin's death the title must become extinct.

BROWNING ON BRIDGE: DCCCXC.

A FEW MORE WORDS ABOUT NO-TRUMPS.

ANOTHER reason for that soft corner in my heart for no-trumps, referred to last week, is that of late our experts, authorities, etc., seem to look upon no-trumps as a sort of second-rate affair, only employed by amateurs and weak players who know no better, while they (the experts, etc.) just use no-trumps as a stepping-stone towards their one great contract ambition—a slam bid in a suit; for, of course, experts, etc., are only interested in slam bids and play, such smaller fish as a game hardly comes into their reckoning—no, not even a rubber; but, to be sure, they rarely play rubber bridge—I judge by the exemplary hands they give us, which are always played at duplicate, and nearly always are slam affairs. There are, however, a great number of rubber players still left in this country, and they, I hope, despite the contempt in which no-trumps would seem to be held by experts, will go on bidding, playing, and enjoying this, their most favourite game.

Now, I grant it may be on account of the more usual no-trump bidding by weaker players that our experts, etc., started to decry this play. I like to look at and analyse so far as I can all points of view. (This, I may say, is not always easy.) There is no doubt that some no-trump bidding is extremely stupid and meaningless. Thus: North, one no-trump; South, two no-trumps; North, three no-trumps, is—well, just stupid. It often results in a loss, while all the time there may be a useful part score to be picked up—possibly a game in some suit contract. On this bidding, in most cases, it is as well to let the bidding die at two no-trumps, unless, of course, original bidder has a useful and hopeful suit to show at the three level. Then, suppose you open with one spade, and partner responds two no-trumps, thus showing a good all-round hand. Then you bid three hearts, when it will be a good bet, I fear, that partner, without a thought, will immediately bid three no-trumps. This is merely telling his story twice over, which is of no interest to you, and is bad bidding; you want to know if he can support either of your suits, and in this bidding situation, nine times out of ten, your partner should respond three spades over your three-heart bid.

The hard fact is, there is more selfishness than sense in the three no-trump bid. Your partner has made up his mind that he must play the hand, and thinks the best way to make sure of this is to closure the bidding in no-trumps. That idea, thoughtless, selfish, or whatever it may be, again is just stupid, and does nothing but debase the no-trump currency. Your partner should remember that, whatever he bids on the second round, you may put the call back into no-trumps anyhow, but, if you should be holding a genuine two-suiter, you only want a preference from partner so that the hand may be played in that suit. This brings us back to what, in my opinion, is one of the most important contract bidding principles, *i.e.*, the final contract in nearly every case should be left to the decision of the original bidder. It may not be out of place to remark here that, on the same principle, the decision to play a hand in a slam bid should be left to the player who *first* suggests and asks for slam possibilities. But although in this way some players may have brought discredit on no-trumps, it is no certainty that our experts, etc., have not themselves had a share in this business as well. More on this subject next week.

SOLUTIONS OF CROSS-WORD PUZZLES, MARCH 5.

"THE SKETCH" CROSS-WORD.

ACROSS.—6. There. 7. Seven. 10. Sire. 12. Veal. 13. Bail. 14. Enrol. 17. Earl. 18. Dooms. 19. Let. 20. Asti. 22. Sting. 24. Off. 26. H.M.S. 27. Ash. 29. Strabo. 32. Hornet. 35. Eire. 36. Ass. 38. Kent. 39. Red gas. 41. Agape. 43. Annuals. 44. Map. 46. Odontological. 49. Erase. 50. Alas. 51. Inns. 52. Tent.

DOWN.—1. Shelter. 2. Fried. 3. Bells. 4. Several. 5. Asbestos. 6. Trial. 8. Nears. 9. All night. 11. Pro. 15. North. 16. Omens. 21. Afternoon. 23. Imps. 25. Friend. 27. Anne. 28. Set. 30. Arduous. 31. Began. 33. Okapi. 34. Rep. 36. Assort. 37. Samos. 40. Alter. 42. Gages. 45. Plan. 47. Cat. 48. Ale.

"THE SKETCH" DIFFICULT CROSS-WORD.

ACROSS.—1. Lastage. 5. Camelot. 9. White man's burden. 10. Ever. 11. Herma. 12. Herb. 15. Smithy. 16. Arch-wise. 18. Gigantic. 19. Peewit. 22. Arne. 23. Fleet. 24. Pict. 27. Huntingdonshire. 28. Resists. 29. Tear gas.

DOWN.—1. Lawless. 2 and 14. Shivering in one's shoes. 3. Axes. 4. Enamel. 5. Costmary. 6. Maud. 7. Ladies in waiting. 8. Tenable. 13. Thing. 17. Pillages. 18. Gnasher. 20. Titters. 21. Report. 25. Miss. 26. Ossa.

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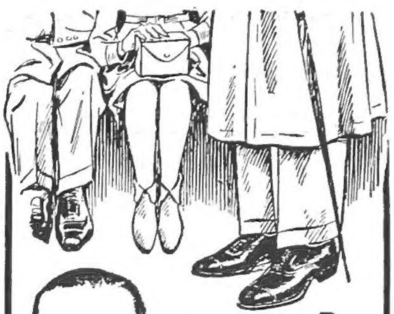

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